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Congress of the
Devastated Districts...

From devastated Latvia to
the agriculturists...

[London]

[1921]

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From Devastated Latvia to the Agriculturists and Citizens of Great Britain

THE Agriculturists' Congress of the Devastated Districts of Latvia was held at Riga on March 19, 20, and 21 of this year, in which 741 representatives of 124 devastated districts took part. The Congress and its permanent plenipotentiary Council send their brotherly greetings to ENGLISH farmers and citizens. We express our unmixed joy that ENGLAND has been spared the actual horrors of war. Nevertheless we cannot pass over in silence one factor which rests heavily upon young Latvia and paralyses the renewal of cultural and economic life in the districts devastated by war. We beg you to remember that Latvia—whose sons in thousands stood in the first ranks and died readily during seven years' heavy struggle against the invaders, for those ideals which were proclaimed by the Allied Powers—has been neglected, as if forgotten, at the adjudication and distribution of means of support for the losses and devastations caused by the German forces, Bermond's treacherous attack, and Bolshevik power in the country, which over vast districts wiped our farms with all their belongings off the surface of the earth.

In Latvia there are 25,000 devastated farms (of which 15,000 are entirely destroyed), which without energetic assistance from outside will not be able

to renew their life; 25 per cent. of the arable land, i.e. nearly 1,330,000 hectares, has suffered through the war; of these nearly 413,283 hectares have been reduced through the war to such a state that without considerable support and work they cannot be rendered suitable for the cultivation of corn. Especially great need in seed is felt. For a single spring sowing alone some 4,498 tons of barley, 4,300 tons of oats, and 2,491 tons of mixed seed are lacking, without reckoning potatoes and other vegetables. The autumn harvest is in want of seed—6,000 tons of winter rye and 670 tons of winter wheat. Through the war 70,000 horses have been destroyed, the lack of which is severely felt in the cultivation of corn in the country. Besides, 170,000 cattle, 28,319 vehicles, 28,319 sets of harness, 21,236 ploughs, 4,000 corn-reapers and the same quantity of mowers, and about 4,000 horse-rakes have been destroyed.

The number of destroyed houses in Latvia is so enormous that it is very difficult for us to realise and grasp it. In the country 76,278 houses, in towns and villages 5,125 houses, in all 81,403 houses have been entirely destroyed and razed to the ground. Of houses damaged and partly destroyed, there are 104,576 in the country, 11,856 in towns and villages—a total of 116,432. The total number of houses that have suffered is 197,845. These devastations have mostly affected the economic and cultural life of Latvia. The conditions in which the farmers affected with their families and little children live are indescribable. The number of children suffering want in the devastated districts is 28,296 from 1 to 10 years old and 21,200 from 10 to 14 years old. By local means the fifth part of these unhappy sufferers can be provided for, but about 40,000

children are in a pitiable condition, without hope and with a dismal outlook in the future. In addition to this, thousands of war invalids, unprovided families, and the unfortunate children of the fallen heroes must be considered. In Latvia are 30,000 families, in which 60,000 male members have fallen in the world-war, who receive no support. There are 2,430 male members of families fallen in the wars against Bermondts and the Bolsheviks. The country is able to give assistance only to the families of soldiers fallen in battle against Bermondts and Bolsheviks, i.e. to 2,430 persons, besides the most needy invalids of the three wars—namely, to 8,392 persons. So that all other families of fallen warriors and all other invalids are left without any support.

Disregarding all the horrible misery which the war and our enemies have caused, the energy and will of the Latvian citizen and farmer to renew the destroyed life are great and unflinching. We have overcome the terrors of the world-war; we have cleared our country of Bermondts and Bolsheviks; we have taken our place as an independent State by the side of our elder sisters; and we are convinced that it will be possible also to overcome the economic destruction, if our elder sisters and other more fortunate nations will not forget us and extend to us their protecting hand, for the means of our young State are insufficient for the reconstruction of our destroyed life, and we are not able to heal by ourselves all those wounds which have been inflicted by the enemy.

In the name of the Congress of the Devastated Districts, the suffering farmers, their families, unhappy children, invalids, and orphans, we come to you and all the World with the request to

support us in our just demand—not to be forgotten at the adjudication and distribution of compensation for war-losses. We trust to find support by you also if Latvia comes to the friendly nations for a loan for the reconstruction of our destroyed life. We know that you will find other ways and means to come to the assistance of the farmers, as well as the stricken families, extending cultural and economic help to grown-ups as well as to children, arranging feeding-points, providing dried products, clothing, etc. The permanent and plenipotentiary Council of the Congress of the Devastated Districts undertakes the control and responsibility of just distribution. Latvia will never forget the aid and support which she will receive from you or through your mediation. These will be fresh ties which will bind us to your country in the work of reconstruction of Latvian cultural and economic life. Thanks to your sympathy and support we shall be able to overcome also our last enemy—economic destruction.

In the name and on behalf of the Congress of the Devastated Districts of Latvia.

B. P. GAILITS,

Chairman of the Permanent
Council of the Congress.

TH. UPMANS,

Secretary.

May 12, 1921.

RIGA, 37 ALEXANDERSTREET.

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